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FOR THE BOYS

THE RETURNED SOLDIER AS A BETTER SALESMAN

His Training in Camp and Field
Has Developed Him
Mentally, Morally
and Physically

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My Compliments
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The Returned Soldier as a Better Salesman

His Training in Camp and Field Has Developed Him Mentally, Morally and Physically

By CAPTAIN EUGENE H. LEDERER
Quartermaster Corps, U. S. Army

Many times in the past few days, manufacturers and jobbers have sounded me as to where they are going to secure their future salesmen. So, I take it from the questions put to me that I am correct in believing that salesmen are to be in demand, more so than ever.

No doubt, employers are seeking knowledge as to whether or not they will go to the field of returned officers and men for their future sales force, or develop them from the ranks of their employees. In sounding out my judgment, they have taken into consideration my experience in the commercial world, in handling advertising, and in selling organizations, and my experience of eighteen months, during the emergency in the army, thus securing an outside and an inside opinion.

I will state in a concise form, first, the disabilities in salesmen before the war, as they appeared to me, and then I will express my opinion as to whether or not the training while in the camps, the duties performed while in active service, and the methods used in the army would be proper training in salesmanship.

The disabilities which I found to be common in young salesmen before the war were :

1. Timidity and fright ;
2. Lack of physical magnetism ;
3. Inability to understand or read human nature ;
4. Lack of force ;
5. Hastiness ;
6. Dread of reports.

The first weakness I found to be the predominant cause of most failures, and surely the army has instructed the young man and the young officer to overcome this failing. But in order to do so it had to send men through drills that would overcome the fright of "hearing their own voice" especially in the case of young officers who had to give commands.

The second has been overcome by the army through setting-up exercises in the morning, proper living, regular hours, and outdoor activity. We have seen the wonderful physical changes in the appearances of the recruits, due to conditions under which they lived in camps. The future corps of salesmen will be a heavier, stronger, and broader-visioned group.

MEN MADE LEADERS OF MEN

Someone has said that the best school of salesmanship was the school of hard knocks. If this theory be true, then no doubt the conditions under which the newsboys labor are conditions favorable to the development of salesmanship. For salesmen deal with human nature—and who are receiving better training in the handling of human nature than the newsboys on the street corner? None except the boys who have gone through the army camps (commissioned officers) where they had been taught how to handle men, and how to lead them at all times.

Force is developed through a healthy physical being, and the living conditions which I have mentioned above, are con-

ditions upon which force is built, and what officer can stand before his men, a weakling, without force and power to lead them through perilous positions in distressing moments, when a cool head is more valuable for a victory than are cannon? So, the army officer must be the symbol of force.

Hastiness has been the cause of many small orders and numerous failures in sales. What training will develop the virtue of patience more than trench training, when men are drilled up to the highest peak of intensive energy and will have to reserve this energy until orders are given for action?

"I can't get that fellow to send in reports" has been the expression worn out by many sales managers, but now, these same managers will smile, for no organization requires more reports than the army, and the habit has been formed by all officers.

Should it become my lot to select and choose salesmen for domestic or foreign fields, my attention and efforts would be directed to secure men who have been in service over there or over here. It is remarkable how many of the men have

mastered the foreign languages (French, Italian and Spanish) in the short period of time that they have been in the army. A cleaner, a more vigorous, or a better educated group of men cannot be found anywhere in the world than a group of American army officers. The future export trade of American business houses will be secure if those houses are represented by red-blooded American army reserve officers in foreign lands. They will bring home victory in commercial pursuits, as well as give peace to the world.

"The Returned Soldier as a Better Salesman"—featured in *Printers' Ink* for December 19, 1918—is a subject that has been freely discussed at the meetings of the New York Sales Managers' Club, before conscription, during the war, and quite recently. Fundamentally, the points brought out in the article by Captain Lederer are correct.—By C. F. Abbott, President New York Sales Managers' Club, in "*Printers' Ink*," January 2, 1919.

